

PERMANENT MISSION OF THE  
UNITED ARAB EMIRATES  
TO THE UNITED NATIONS  
NEW YORK



البعثة الدائمة  
للإمارات العربية المتحدة  
لدى الأمم المتحدة  
نيويورك

Unofficial Translation

Statement by

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of the United Arab Emirates

before

The General Debate of the 78th session of the United Nations General Assembly

New York, 23 September 2023

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Mr. President,

I would like to congratulate Your Excellency on assuming the presidency of this session. I also value the efforts made by His Excellency Csaba Krösi during his presidency of the previous session.

I would like to reiterate our sincere condolences to the governments and the peoples of the Kingdom of Morocco and the state of Libya after the recent disasters that hit the two countries.

Mr. President,

The UAE declared this year the Year of Sustainability, under the theme "Today for Tomorrow" to honour our shared responsibility to present and future generations, who deserve to live in a world that is safe, and prosperous. We also seek to honour and build upon the efforts of those who preceded us and strived for the advancement of our nations. Our responsibility is to preserve our planet, our natural resources as well as our cultural heritage.

The UAE believes that this fundamental premise should guide our approach to the existential challenges facing our world today. This particularly applies to armed conflicts, currently at their highest since World War II, and the increasing frequency and impact of climate disasters. It also includes our enduring efforts to preserve and defend our shared human values in a world dominated by the unrelenting waves of extremism, racism, and hate speech.

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Fortunately, more than at any other time in history, we are capable of overcoming these challenges. We have reached the highest level yet of advancement: today we possess the technology required to find innovative solutions to complex challenges; we have put in place regional and international institutions to coordinate collective action; and we are equipped with the necessary legal frameworks to organize international relations.

What is lacking is strong political will, the determination to confront existential challenges and a clear-sighted vision for the future - instead of dwelling on futile divisions and emphasizing differences. These are the true obstacles to joint action. The UAE has seen this first hand, during our time as members of Security Council since last year. Time and time again, geopolitical tensions have held the Council back from reaching consensus on urgent matters, even on strictly humanitarian issues. This is why we must engage in serious discussions on comprehensive and meaningful reforms of the Security Council, specifically pertaining to the use of the veto; the expansion of permanent and elected membership; the Council's working methods and its ability to anticipate and effectively resolve crises.

The UAE emphasizes the importance of maintaining an international order that is based on respect for the sovereignty, independence, and territorial integrity of states. International relations must be governed by international law, including the UN resolutions.

Resorting to the use of force instead of relying on political solutions and dividing the world into an "us against them" mentality is a zero-sum game. This will only lead to more chaos and blunt our diplomatic tools. We underscore the importance of respecting diversity, political differences, and development disparities. We must give prominence to common values to advance cooperation and integration between peoples and countries.

It is essential to enhance the effectiveness of international organizations, key among them the United Nations. These institutions are crucial for building bridges, reducing tensions, and establishing peaceful solutions. We depend on the United Nations, as the first line of defense, to prevent the multilateral arena from becoming polarized when political rifts between major countries occur. We also believe that regional organizations, such as the League of Arab States and the African Union play a critical role due to their understanding and familiarity with local contexts and are better positioned to play a pivotal role in supporting these endeavors and political processes.

Mr. President,

The UAE believes that the best way to resolve crises is through peaceful means. This is particularly important for our region, which is ravaged by weapons and extremist ideologies. The UAE continues to exert efforts to reduce escalations and call for dialogue and diplomacy to resolve differences. We have been focusing on creating a new reality to strengthen economic integration among the countries of our region. This would benefit the economies and people of the region and will enhance regional stability and prosperity.



The UAE renews its demand to Iran to end its occupation of the three UAE islands: Greater Tunb, Lesser Tunb, and Abu Musa. Our legitimate right to these islands has not diminished and time will not diminish nor extinguish our sovereignty over these islands. We will continue to seek a resolution, either through direct negotiation or through the International Court of Justice. This has been our firm stance for decades.

We stress the position of the Gulf Cooperation Council that calls on Iraq to take serious and urgent steps to address the negative consequences of the ruling of its Federal Supreme Court regarding the agreement concluded between Kuwait and Iraq on the regulation of maritime navigation in Khor Abdullah. This needs to be done in a manner that serves good neighbourly relations, in line with international law and the agreements signed between the two countries.

We are ultimately guided by the "Zero Problems with Neighbours" principle. Regardless of how great the challenge, it is critical to restore the legitimate sovereignty of states and prevent extremist and armed groups from maintaining a presence in our region. We must move forward with a vision that promotes peace, openness, co-existence, cooperation, and development.

We believe that achieving this vision is possible. Our region is full of hope, resources, and our youth has great potential to lead our nations towards security, stability, and prosperity. This can only be achieved with political will and determined efforts.

The UAE refuses to accept that conflicts in our region are inevitable. We believe that security, stability and prosperity will be restored in Yemen, Syria, Sudan, Libya, Iraq and Lebanon. We also believe in the establishment of an independent Palestinian state on the 1967 borders, with East Jerusalem as its capital.

Without eradicating extremism, hatred and racism from our region and globally, these efforts will not succeed. It has become abundantly clear that hate speech and extremism are closely linked to the spread and escalation of conflict. The Security Council acknowledged this fact in its historic resolution 2686 concerning tolerance, international peace and security last June. An important initiative in which the UAE played a prominent role.

The promotion of the values of tolerance and peaceful coexistence has an impact on people globally. Not only in words, but through their direct implementation. Acts such as destroying a church in Iraq, burning the holy Qur'an in Sweden, or attacking a Jewish Cultural Center in Argentina are all unacceptable actions that lead to chaos and discord. When dealing with these acts, we must do our utmost to refrain from double standards. Therefore, it is important to close policy gaps and develop integrated and effective strategies that guarantee human rights, strengthen stability in communities, and address racist practices. Among those is the exclusion and discrimination against women and girls, as is the case in Afghanistan.



Mr. President,

The international community should be determined in its efforts to address the greatest threats to global stability, namely the development of nuclear weapons and the undermining of the global non-proliferation regime. We must never tolerate this type of threat, nor accept the risk of a nuclear conflict, one that would result in devastating consequences for all.

We also stress the importance of alleviating the suffering of people affected by conflict situations, particularly through humanitarian exceptions when sanctions measures are imposed. We should be mindful that civilians, and especially children, are not responsible for these conflicts. In the aftermath of the devastating earthquake this year in Syria, we have seen Arab nations set an example by prioritizing humanitarian support.

As part of the UAE efforts to alleviate the suffering of people affected by crises through all possible means, we plan to launch a digital platform that employs advanced technologies to enable affected states to better harness international support in the wake of natural disasters. This digital platform will help in providing urgent, effective and coordinated humanitarian responses.

I would like to emphasize that the interplay between conflicts and other serious challenges, particularly climate change, food and energy security, and water crises, can cause significant consequences for present and future generations.

The climate crisis is an important juncture in our history. The results of the first Global Stocktake only confirm how far off track we are in implementing the objectives of the Paris Agreement. To keep 1.5 degrees within reach, we need transformational change. Some may see this as impossible... but the UAE disagrees.

In this spirit, the UAE is hosting the 28<sup>th</sup> session of the United Nations Climate Change Conference, COP28, in two months. We will focus on intensifying international cooperation to achieve the highest ambitions possible. The action plan of the conference will focus on four main axes: accelerating an orderly and just transition in the energy sector, advancing climate financing mechanisms, and enhancing the livelihoods and protection of individuals according to a transparent and inclusive framework.

We must restore hope and be optimistic regarding our ability to confront climate change. The UAE believes that the transformation of the energy sector will provide a great opportunity to enhance and sustain human and economic development.

It is important to focus on financing as an essential tool in this process. This would require, among other things, improving the international financial structure, encouraging the private sector to finance climate action, ensuring the fulfilment of pledges by donors, and fully operationalizing the Loss and Damage Fund.



In line with the UAE's values and approach, we will utilize the contributions of women, youth and civil society, as well as the private sector. Government agencies should also fulfil their responsibilities to confront climate change. We must remain united, and work together to make progress.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend an open invitation to the world to actively participate in this conference and develop collective solutions to achieve a substantial shift in confronting climate change. A shift that allows us to move our focus from negotiations to achieving tangible results in pursuit of an inclusive and sustainable future.

By addressing climate change, we can alleviate the food insecurity crisis. This requires further investment in food supply systems and safeguarding them from damage or attacks. It also demands a focus on the development of smart systems to increase productivity and minimize the impact of natural disasters and insecurity.

Water scarcity is an increasingly challenging issue globally, it has yet to receive the attention it deserves. There is an urgent need to find new models of international cooperation to address this challenge and make it a top priority for multilateral action. The UAE seeks to find effective solutions by working with international partners to address this important issue. Today, the UAE's Foreign Ministry has published a report, which we hope will contribute to achieving this goal.

To conclude, global challenges are becoming increasingly interlinked. No country nor organization is capable of addressing them alone. We are seeing this in the actions of terrorist groups in our region who recruit their fighters and mobilize funds across borders. We have also witnessed this phenomenon during the COVID pandemic which affected countries throughout the world. The suffering of civilians from conflicts should not be defined by borders.

The UAE believes that collective action is no longer simply an option, but an urgent need. Today's decisions will have far-reaching consequences for decades to come. We should ask ourselves: What is the legacy we want to leave for future generations? Do we want our legacy to be conflicts and crises, and scarce resources? Or do we want our legacy to be a stable and prosperous international order, where communities peacefully co-exist and are resilient in the face of global challenges?

In the UAE, peace is our choice, development is our path, and a stable future is our destination. In the return of Emirati astronaut Sultan Al Neyadi, from the first long Arab mission in space, we see the potential of future leaders in our youth. A leadership that will bolster our achievements and usher in a promising future. We are determined to follow in the footsteps of the founders of the UAE. We strive to achieve greater advancements and further investments in humanity and science for the people of the world. Our unwavering determination to achieve these objectives is demonstrated in our policies, decisions, and relationships.

Thank you, Mr. President.